

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

# ANCIENT RIVER BEDS IN CENTRAL ASIA

S. V. Tolstov

Corresponding Member, USSR Academy of Sciences

Director, USSR Institute of Ethnography

THE history of the ancient beds of the Amu-Darya river has for decades been one of the most complicated and controversial problems of Central Asian paleogeography. The discussions on the Uzboy river-bed and the Amu-Darya Caspian mouth are well known. The first expedition to tackle the problem was sent by Peter the Great and headed by Bekovich-Cherkassky, who died tragically during the expedition. Geographers and historians—Bartold, Berg, Konshin, Kaulbars, Obruchev, Gedroits and many others—did much research on this problem in the nineteenth century. Foreign geographical and historical literature has also contributed to these studies. De Goue, the well-known orientalist, maintained the existence of a current in the Uzboy river in the Middle Ages, as against Bartold, the Russian Academician. One of the later works, that of A. Germann, the German student of ancient historical geography, is noteworthy. Much attention has been paid to the Uzboy problem by such well-known scientists as V. Tarn (Britain), in *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge, 1938), and *The Oxus Question Today*, and E. Herzfeld (German-American), in *Zoroaster and his World* (Princeton, 1947, v.2, XXVIII).

Did the Caspian estuary of the Amu-Darya river exist in classical antiquity or in the Middle Ages, especially after the thirteenth-century Mongol invasion? What factors caused the alteration in the river and the stoppage or supposed restoration of the flow at different periods? There has been much argument on these questions; and while the geographers and geologists who have worked on the site have been inclined to believe in a relatively ancient origin for the dry-beds of the Amu-Darya river, historians relying on a few written sources have taken up very controversial standpoints. The archaeological material has scarcely been used. Though a number of archaeological monuments on the Uzboy were discovered as early as the nineteenth century (Konshin, Obruchev and others), there was no scientific description of them, and not one archaeologist throughout the nineteenth century, and most of the first half of the twentieth, visited either the Uzboy or the Sarykamysh or the bed of the ancient Sarykamysh delta of the Amu-Darya, which had been especially rich in well-preserved monuments of antiquity and of the Middle Ages. The 1939 Chorasmia expedition was the first to start excavations in the region. Before the war we had merely made long reconnaissances along the lands of ancient irrigation of the Sarykamysh delta and in the upper reaches of the Uzboy, and studied the southern part of the right bank of the Amu-Darya Akchadar delta.

After the war, in 1947, we made an air reconnaissance of the Sarykamysh delta, Lake Sarykamysh and the upper portion of the Uzboy bed up to the ruins of Ak-Yaila, a medieval caravanserai on the left bank of the Uzboy. Only in 1950, with the completion of the excavations at the dead town of Toprak-kala (in the Shabbazk district of the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic), did the history of the ancient beds and the ancient irrigation system connected with them gradually become our key problem.

In the last few years the Chorasmia expedition has been working in co-operation with the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Geography. A. S. Kes, author of the first important post-1917 monograph on the mysterious bed of the Uzboy, published in 1939, is in charge of the geomorphological group.

The great expanses of the Kara-Kum and Kzyl-Kum deserts, except for the ancient rocky plateaux scattered over them, result from the great Central Asian rivers the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya. On the great desert stretches of Kara-Kum, from the Aral Sea to the Kopet-Dag mountains and from the Amu-Darya to the Caspian Sea, and in the Kzyl-Kum north of the hills skirting the Zeravshan oasis, are to be found traces of ancient streams and lakes, in the form of alluvium and lake deposits, incised valleys, shells of aquatic molluscs, sandbanks, shallows, and so on. The deserts are in typical sandy æolian relief. The mineralogical composition of the deposits does not differ from that of the modern alluvium of the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya. Numerous ancient dried-up rivers run latitudinally or longitudinally, especially in the northern parts. Some of them, such as the Uzboy bed, 500 kilometres long from Sary-kamysh to the Caspian, look like valleys left only yesterday by the river waters; others, less clearly defined, are silted up and traceable only by means of cartography and air reconnaissance. In the southern Kara-Kum, where the valley of the most ancient Amu-Darya bed was located, no defined bed is traceable. The process of forming an æolian relief of sands has smoothed over all traces, and only the mineralogical composition of the sands makes it a certainty that this was once the valley of the great Central Asian river.

The fundamental scientific conclusions reached after years of research by a whole army of modern scientists coincide strikingly with the rough but vivid picture of the history of the Amu-Darya outlined over 900 years ago by Abu-Raikhan al-Biruni, the great Chorasmian scholar. Describing the desert "between Dzhurdzhan and Chorasmia" [the Kara-Kum desert], Biruni wrote that long since the Dzheihun current [the Amu-Darya] "flowed through it into the Khazar [Caspian] Sea, past the town called Balkhan".\* Later "its waters turned to the borders of the land of Gzians [to the north]". The stream met a mountain, now called Fam-al-Ased [the lion's mouth]. The river broke through the stony obstacle and passed on "for the space of a day's journey. Then it turned to the right towards Farab . . . [the middle streams of the Syr-Darya] and on the bank of the river over 300 towns and villages were built, whose ruins are to be seen now." But this Dzheikhun bed, which he called al-Fakhmi [the bed of stagnant waters], also silted up, "and the waters turned to the left up to the land of Pecheneg, along the bed now known as Vadi Mazdubast in the desert, between Chorasmia and Dzhurdzhan. It long flooded many places and destroyed them; their populations migrated to the coasts of the Khazar Sea. This is the tribe of the Ala-Alans and Asians, and their language is now a mixture of Chorasmian and Pecheneg. Then all the waters flowed to Chorasmia and infiltrated the cliffs now at the beginning of the Chorasmian plain. The water broke through the cliffs, flooded the area and formed a lake, beginning there. The Dzheikhun was turbid with the mud it bore from the abundance of water and the strength of the current. When the bed widened, the stream precipitated the earth it carried; the earth gradually hardened and dried, while the lake moved on until the whole of Chorasmia appeared. The lake came up to the perpendicular mountains; it could not combat them, and therefore turned north up to the land now populated by the Turkmenians. The distance between this lake and the one which was near the Mazdubast river is not great; the lake became salted and muddy . . . ; in Turkic it is called Khyz-Tenkizi [the sea of the virgin]."

Thus, according to al-Biruni, in ancient times the Amu-Darya river flowed west and debouched into the Caspian Sea near Balkhan. Later, changing its course, it turned north, passing through the Fam-al-Asad gorge (corresponding to the modern gorge of Duldul-Atlang), which is near to the existing ruins of

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\* *Balkhan*: mountains in the southern Kara-Kum, skirting the Uzboy bed from east and south. No traces of the ancient town have yet been found.

Danisher (in Persian, Dakhan-i-shir means lion's mouth). After covering a distance of several dozen kilometres from this place, the river turned east along the Fakhmi bed (corresponding to the modern bed of the Akcha-Darya) ; next it flowed to Sarykamysh, and finally to the Aral Sea.

This has been fully confirmed by modern scientists (Gerasimov, Fedorovich, Kes) and is generally admitted to be correct.

Two main periods can be suggested for the history of the Amu-Darya river : first, the prehistoric, corresponding to the pliocene, lower quaternary and middle quaternary periods ; secondly, that developing during the upper quaternary and modern periods. During the former, the Amu-Darya, according to al-Biruni, turned west from the region of the modern town of Chardzhou and flowed into the Caspian Sea, watering the Kara-Kum lowlands. The Aral, Sarykamysh, Assakeaudan and other ancient depressions were dry. The Chorasmian lowlands, separated from Sarykamysh and Aral by the ridges of the Ust-Urt, were evidently covered by the waters brought from the south-eastern and southern channels of the Syr-Darya and probably the Zaravshan, which had not yet broken through to the Aral. The second period may be subdivided into three stages, during which the three Amu-Darya deltas—the Akcharanyinsk (Fakhmi bed, according to Biruni), Sarykamysh (Mazdubast, according to Biruni), and the modern Byaralsk delta—were formed.

At the first of these stages, related to the early khvalynsk phase, the river formed its bed east of the modern one, cutting through the elevated plain of the Kzyl-Kum east of the Sultan-Uiz-Dag, and forming a narrow corridor some ninety kilometres long and four or five kilometres wide. Part of this bed ran parallel to the ancient one, which can plainly be related to the early quaternary period and which was probably left by a channel of the ancient Syr-Darya or Zeravshan.

North and south of the Akcha-Darya corridor, the Amu-Darya divided into numerous channels, some of which joined the lake covering the Chorasmian lowland, while the rest ran north and, breaking through the heights north-east of the Bel-Tau, flowed into the Aral depression. The eastern streams of the Akcha-Darya in the lower reaches joined the southern channels of the Zhana-Darya and the ancient river bed of the Syr-Darya. Thus the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya deltas then overlapped and even merged in the lower reaches. The first stages of the formation of the Aral Sea may be dated from this period. The Akcha-Darya delta must thus be divided into two parts, southern and northern, upper and lower.

The level of the Chorasmian lake rose as it silted up with river deposits, and its water started to flow west, cutting through the ridges separating the Amu-Darya from Sarykamysh. This resulted in the formation of a number of channels, through which a large part of the Amu-Darya waters, which had flowed along the channels of the Akcha-Darya delta, went to Sarykamysh, filled up this vast depression, rose above the absolute level mark of fifty-two metres, and flowed south to form the Uzboy bed. This westward turn of a large part of the Amu-Darya waters must belong to the late khvalynsk phase. The concept that the Amu-Darya turned wholly west is hardly true. The findings of our expedition, especially the archaeological, testify to the fact that some of the channels of the Akcha-Darya delta, though greatly weakened, continued to exist at the same time as the Uzboy bed and the channels of the Sarykamysh delta. The contemporaneous existence of the two deltas belongs to the fourth to second millennia B.C., i.e. to the neolithic and late neolithic periods and the bronze age of Chorasmia.

The work of the 1939 expedition was mainly concerned with the Akcha-Darya delta. It was not till 1954 that study began on the Akcha-Darya corridor and the northern delta. This work started with an air reconnaissance along the



Akcha-Darya bed up to the Aral Sea and back, with several landings and visual examination of the bed. Then we made the first ground reconnaissance ; this was relatively short, and was followed in 1955 by another and longer one lasting about a month. We made both archaeological and geomorphological studies. We are now able to form a detailed, though of course not complete, idea of the archaeological monuments of the ancient delta.

The neolithic population of the Akcha-Darya delta was represented by the Dzhanbas-Kala station, already known from earlier publications connected with the 1939 discovery of the Dzhanbas station, four kilometres to the south. The number of stations of the Kelteminar culture has now much increased and totals twenty-five along the whole Akcha-Darya bed. The Kelteminar culture was described in my article *The Early Culture of Chorasmia* (Antiquity, Nos. 7, 8, 1946).\*

The station Dzhanbas 4, a classical monument of the Kelteminar culture, was covered with loess-like loam up to forty centimetres thick and overlaid with sand. A painstaking excavation of the takyr flooring of the site enabled us to establish that these were the remains of a big house made of wood and reeds which had collapsed as the result of a fire. The ceilings had fallen in, and this made it possible to reconstruct it. The flood which had followed the fire had deposited clay over the site, and the remains of the burnt-out structure, the hearths and implements, had thus been safely preserved over more than 5,000 years. The unique conditions enabled us to reconstruct a picture of an ancient Kelteminar dwelling. It was an enormous building of wood and cane, the dimensions being twenty-four by thirty metres, egg-shaped in outline viewed from above, built on top of a high sand-dune. The ceiling had an elongated conical form. According to our calculations, the building reached a height of eight to ten metres in the middle, where the smoke-hole for the perpetual fire was located. This central hearth was surrounded by two concentric circles of numerous cooking fires, near which we found a great many fish-bones (fish being the staple food), a comparatively small number of bones of land mammals and birds, the shells of freshwater molluscs, pottery, and stone implements.

All these characteristic features of Kelteminar culture are to be traced through the whole territory of Chorasmia. We are now able to suggest the chronological modifications of that culture. The Dzhanbas 4 site is unique not only because it is very well preserved, but also because it is one of the most ancient monuments of this culture. The other sites may be dated at different periods in the second millennium B.C. Kelteminar culture has some features in common with the eastern monuments, as well as with southern ridges near the Urals.

A. A. Formozov has traced a wide range of Kelteminar monuments in western Kazakhstan. The recently published monograph by V. N. Chernetzov, the expert on western Siberian archaeology, *Ancient History of the Lower Ob-lands*, proves the existence of close contact between the Kelteminar culture and the monuments of the western Ob-lands. The site near the Andreyevsk lake has a great deal in common with the Kelteminar culture. And, as I have said in *Ancient Chorasmia*, the sites of the Kama-lands (particularly the Levshinsk site at the mouth of the Chusovaya river, investigated by A. V. Schmidt and N. A. Prokshv) are closely related to the Kelteminar culture.

The upper Uzboy neolithic culture on the western outskirts of Chorasmia must be entirely related to the Kelteminar culture. The Uzboy region was very densely populated in the neolithic and late neolithic periods.

In the spring of 1951 an expedition, on five lorries, started from Krasnovodsk

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\* See also ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL, Vol. XII, No. 2: *Ancient Khoresm*, by William Watson.

along the Caspian Sea coast and reached the Aktem channel and the Kelkor salt marsh, formerly a lake, at the spot where the Uzboy joined the Caspian Sea. The expedition made a reconnaissance in the Great Balkhany mountains, where it studied the ruins of the Tash-Arvat and Duinek fortresses, and went to the Uzboy bed and followed it up to the Charyshli well. The expedition made a thorough study of the Uzboy banks, with 226 digs ; it discovered 115 places containing flint implements and excavated four sites (caravanserais and burial grounds) near the river bed.

The study of the ancient Uzboy cultural monuments was continued in 1952-4 by a group headed by M. A. Itina.

Neolithic and late neolithic monuments are very numerous on the Uzboy. Down to the second millennium B.C. the Uzboy was undoubtedly a living river ; the character of distribution of prehistoric relics along the bed offers reliable evidence to this effect. With the exception of the sections of the lower Uzboy where the valley reaches its maximum width and where it was evidently flooded in the prehistoric epoch, forcing the population to live on the original bank far from the bed, they are concentrated in a narrow zone, not more than a few dozen metres from the bank. The degree of concentration of neolithic implements, particularly flint, is so high that for a considerable distance along the bed almost any search on any part of the bank yielded results. The following places particularly abounded in finds : the Aktam bed, which connected a former lake (now the Kelkor salt marsh) joined by the Uzboy with the Balkhan bay of the Caspian Sea ; the northern shore of the Kelkor and the Uzboy itself ; the area between the districts of Kalan-Kuyu and Dekcha ; the region of the Adzhi-Kuin bend and farther up to the Tagalak district ; and finally the upper part of the Uzboy, from the Bala-Isham district to Charyshly, where the Uzboy flowed out of the Sarykamysch depression.

Neolithic settlements were not confined to the Uzboy bed. They are very numerous in the zone of lakes formed by the overflows of the Uzboy ; they were exceptionally numerous around the ancient Uzboy lakes in the region of the Kugunek mountain.

The work done in 1955 enabled us to establish that the neolithic Uzboy monuments fall into two groups, according to location.

The first group includes the monuments of the upper-Uzboy culture, undoubtedly a variety of the Kelteminar. We have shown that the region of the Kugunek mountains and down to Kurtym, and the region of Orta-Kuyu and Yekidzh, were the main centres of the upper-Uzboy culture.

The second group includes the relics of the lower-Uzboy culture ; the leading forms of this culture are long, large, rectangular scrapers, smaller triangular scraper blades and very archaic points, which must have been used as arrow-heads and darts ; and also the implements on blades. These finds are especially numerous along the portion of the bed from Kalan-Kuyu to Tagalak.

Numerous sites with objects from this culture have been recorded in the sands on both banks of the bed from Kalan-Kuyu to Tagalak ; two very interesting sites, No. 110 and No. 114, a little more archaic than the former, have been found in the latter district.

Both Tagalak sites are located on the high left bank of the Uzboy. Site No. 110, 300 kilometres downstream from the Tagalak well, is twenty kilometres from the cliff bank. The flintware was collected in an area about ten kilometres across, sloping gently to the bed. The finds were deposited on a burnt surface of alluvial sand. Some flints were covered with sand, and we found them at a depth of from five to ten centimetres.

Site No. 114 is located close to the Tagalak well in the region where the Uzboy valley narrows abruptly on entering the Tagalak-Burgun gorge. Where the bed turns, the original bank slopes down to a ledge. The implements were



widely scattered in a large hollow half-way down the slope. They are made mainly of the same sorts of flint and display a unity of form, which enables the investigator to attribute them to one period.

By and large, the materials of the two sites are similar. Site No. 114 is notable only for the more archaic forms and the massiveness of the flakes from which the scrapers and adze-like implements were made.

The sites of the Kalan-Kuyu and Dzhoiryk districts yield less extensive but still very interesting material. Site No. 50 in the former district is located in a depression on the left bank of the bed. A richer site, No. 55, on the same bank has yielded a great number of implements. Pottery has been found at both the sites near Tagalak.

Numerous fragments of a spherical round-bottomed vessel with a coloured surface have been found close to a concentration of flints at site No. 110. The form of the vessel, thirty-five centimetres high, is reminiscent of those discovered at Anan II.

Some fragments of pottery collected near the flints in the vicinity of site No. 114 are of a somewhat different character.

Analysis of the flint and pottery of the Uzboy neolithic sites enables us to conclude that the process of populating the lower and upper Uzboy went on from different centres. Both regions were populated simultaneously, and the process was rather late in geological time, in the fourth to third millennia B.C. The ancient Kelteminar tribes evidently moved from the north, from the zone of lakes and overflows, to the newly formed upper bed. The foothill pre-Anau tribes, who had the early neolithic traditions of the Nazundaran culture of the Hotu cave population (near Astrabad), studied by C. S. Coon\*, came from the south to settle there.

While the problem of the upper-Uzboy wave leaves no doubts, theories on the origin of the lower-Uzboy culture are hypothetical because the foothill pre-Anau culture, like the neolithic in southern Turkmenia and north-eastern Iran in general, has been very little studied. The idea of southern relationships may be proved true not only by the rather distant connection with the Hotu flints, but mainly by the knife-shaped blade of Tagalak site No. 114 and the coloured sphere-shaped vessel of the anaus type found at Tagalak site No. 110.

In the aeneolithic period—late third and early second millennia B.C.—the Kelteminar traditions, e.g. asymmetric arrow-heads on blades, spread to the lower-Uzboy sites. In particular they have been found by A. P. Okladnikov in a neolithic cave on the south-western slope of the Bolshoi Balkhan mountain, not far from the town of Uzhebel.

The Kelteminar culture area thus includes a vast southern region of hunting and fishing tribes, river basins with sources in the middle and southern Urals, and a vast basin of ancient lakes and Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya channels up to the lower Uzboy. Most ancient monuments have been found in Chorasmia. In my opinion, however, much new information can be obtained through searches in regions farther south, particularly in the almost unstudied zone of the Unguz depression, which crosses the Kara-Kum desert latitudinally and cuts it into the lower and the Zaunguss Kara-Kum. It is also a great pity that we know very little of the neolithic monuments of Iran, Baluchistan and western Afghanistan, and of vast Indian territories. Unless we have sufficient material on these areas, we can hardly arrive at a final solution of the problem of the original centres of the Kelteminar culture. As I have said in *Ancient Chorasmia* and *Tracing Ancient Chorasmian Civilisation*, it is in the Kelteminar culture that we should try to find an explanation of the origin of the

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\* C. S. Coon: *Excavations of Hotu Cave, Iran*, 1951. L. B. Dupree: *The Pleistocene Artifacts of Hotu Cave, Iran*; *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, v. 96, No. 3, June 1952.

contacts reflected in the vocabulary of the pre-Indo-European languages of India (Dravidian and Munda) and the Urals (Ugro-Finnish and Samoyed), particularly Ugro.

We have not as yet any anthropological material on neolithic Khoresm. My next lecture, however, will show that the bronze-age burial ground Kokcha 3 permits us to conclude that by the end of the second millennium B.C. the Chorasmian population was of a prognathous type, evidently connected with the Indian dravidoids, who possibly derive from the Kelteminar epoch and lower-Uzboy culture.

The topography of the Kelteminar sites of the Akcha-Darya delta is extremely important as regards our central problem. They were normally located on the edge of the delta and the primeval sands above the waterline, or at the foothills of large inter-delta island-mounts (this is how the Dzhanbas-Kala complex of sites, including Dzhanbas 4, is located). Neolithic sites are as a rule found inside the delta on mounds in both main and lateral river beds. As we shall see later, this is the cardinal point of difference between the neolithic and the bronze-age sites in the southern Akcha-Darya delta. The facts given testify that in the neolithic epoch the Akcha-Darya delta was still very well watered. The vast delta area was covered with swampy ground overgrown with forests and reeds and abounding with a variety of game; the region was not suited to human life. It was all the less so on account of the very unstable water level; the delta regions were evidently frequently flooded, as Dzhanbas 4 stratigraphy vividly demonstrates. So man, who was primarily either a hunter or a fisherman, was forced to live outside the delta itself on the border of the Kzyl-Kum primeval sands. The fauna of the Kelteminar sites testifies to the same effects: the tugai-wood animals conform to characteristic sand forms.

The sites of the Kelteminar (upper-Uzboy) culture are very numerous not only on the banks of the river bed, but also on those of the ancient lakes and overflows of the Uzboy upper reaches. Evidently the neolithic and aeneolithic were the periods of maximum water in the Uzboy zone.

We do not know much about post-Kelteminar forms of aeneolithic culture. True, there are some sites on both banks of the Amu-Darya which may date from this period, but it is still difficult to say anything for certain as to the period and local variations of the aeneolithic culture. Monuments of bronze-age culture—mid second and early first millennia B.C.—are, however, very numerous. They are particularly so in the Akcha-Darya delta zone, their number amounting to sixty. It is very characteristic that the localisation of sites in the Akcha-Darya delta differs very sharply from that of the neolithic sites. Most of the bronze-age sites are located inside the delta, on *takyr*-like loams, close to the lateral channels; they are exceptionally numerous along the banks of small channels about ten metres wide or less. We have discovered hardly any bronze-age sites outside the delta in the primeval sands. This is undoubtedly connected with two factors. On the one hand, we can assert that the amount of water in the upper delta underwent a considerable decrease in the late second and early first millennia. On the other hand—and this is the more important factor—cardinal changes took place in the way of life and productive activities of the ancient delta population. Hunters and fishermen were succeeded by primitive cattle-breeders and agriculturists.

*Tr. R. BROWNING.*

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*Abbreviated text of lecture delivered in Britain, 1956, as guest of the London University Institute of Archaeology.*

# PROBLEMS OF EXPANDING DEMOCRACY

## I.

### *Reforms Required in Constitutional Law*

**T**HE twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, after noting the further strengthening of Soviet society and the Soviet system, pointed out that the great problems involved in building communism necessitated unfaltering application of the principles of socialist democracy laid down in the constitution of the USSR, the persistent improvement of the work of the Soviet authorities, both central and local, and the reinforcement of socialist observance of law.

One of the most important constitutional principles of the Soviet State is the principle of the socialist observance of law. The Constitution of the USSR repeatedly underlines the importance of the socialist legal system and the defence of the great rights of Soviet citizens.

Article 112 of the Constitution proclaims the independence of judges and their subordination only to law. Article 111, which ensures the right of an accused person to defence, raises the importance of defence to the level of a constitutional guarantee. Article 127 assures the inviolability of the person and provides that a citizen may not be arrested except by decision of a court or with the sanction of a Procurator. Article 128 guarantees the inviolability of a citizen's dwelling and the secrecy of correspondence.

The requirement that the principle of observance of the law shall be strictly maintained is expressed likewise in the Constitution when laying down the equality of all citizens before the law. The Soviet Constitution obliges all institutions of government to act on the basis of the laws and each citizen to observe the laws, which are the expression of the interests and the will of the working people.

For some considerable time in our country there was widespread the cult of the personality of J. V. Stalin, which was alien to the socialist system and to socialist democracy. It caused great damage to the Soviet people—one expression of this being the infringement of socialist legality. As a result of the activities of the people's enemies—the Beria gang at the head of the State security authorities—many honest Soviet people were slandered and unjustly punished. Great harm was done by J. V. Stalin's formula about the sharpening of class struggle in a country the nearer it approaches to socialism. This formula was brought into the forefront in 1937, when socialism in our country was already victorious while the exploiting classes and their economic basis had been eliminated.

As was pointed out in the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the overcoming of the cult of the individual and its consequences, “in practice this mistaken theoretical formula served as the justification for the most gross breaches of socialist legality and mass repressions”. A most flagrant breach of legality was the fact that Stalin not infrequently substituted his personal decisions for the customary application of the standards of justice, and his own personal supervision of the State security organisations for supervision by the party and the government.

The Central Committee of the CPSU took steps to put an end to breaches of legality born of the cult of the individual. Among these steps were the review of unjustified prosecutions and quashing of sentences on persons unjustly condemned; the establishment of proper control by the party and government, centrally and locally, of the organisations of State security; the

re-staffing of the latter, as well as of the courts and the Procurator's Office, with tested personnel deserving of confidence ; and the complete restoration of the supervisory rights of the Procurator's Office, the role of which in the struggle for the observance of Soviet legality was strengthened. The new "Statute on Control by the Procurator's Office in the USSR", based on Lenin's principles for the activity of Soviet procurators, regulates the varied activities of this institution in assuring supreme control over the exact fulfilment of the laws.<sup>1</sup>

An important measure in the reinforcement of legality was also the abolition of the extra-judicial body known as the Special Conference attached to the Ministry of the Interior,<sup>2</sup> and the concentration of all the machinery of justice in the courts elected on the basis of the constitution of the USSR and the Constitutions of the Union Republics.

In keeping with the Edict of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on August 14, 1954, presidiums<sup>3</sup> have been formed within the Supreme Courts of the Union and Autonomous Republics, and in territory and regional courts. This has enhanced the part played by the Supreme Courts and local courts concerned in effecting judicial supervision, and eliminates inconveniences for citizens when presenting complaints.

It should be noted that on the basis of the cult of the individual there arose in particular branches of the machinery of State such shortcomings, alien to the nature of the Soviet State, as the element of unnecessary show and display, bureaucracy, and inattentiveness to the needs and demands of the working people. Communist and Soviet principles require putting into effect Lenin's conceptions for the working of the machinery of State : connection with the wide mass of the people, economy, encouragement of creative initiative, the struggle against bureaucracy in all its shapes and forms.

Local Soviets of Working People's Deputies bear considerable responsibility for the observance of Soviet law. The Constitution of the USSR imposes obligations on them to protect public order, assure the observance of the laws, and defend the rights of the citizen. Yet in the activity of the local Soviets themselves there are cases of breach of legality—incorrect assessment of citizens for payment of the agricultural tax, unlawful imposition of work on citizens, imposition of fines without lawful foundation. There are still cases when the executive committees of local Soviets take illegal decisions. This is evidence that the work of the Soviets and their executive committees is not always kept within the strictest framework of legality, while the Soviets above them maintain insufficient supervision over the work of the lower Soviets and do not always ensure the timely correction of their mistakes and cancellation of wrongful decisions.

The measures taken to strengthen socialist legality and to ensure the strict observance of constitutional standards have already begun to produce positive results. Since the twentieth Congress of the CPSU the work of the local Soviets has noticeably improved, the periods for holding their sessions have been more precisely observed, the activity of their deputies has increased, and their links with the electors have grown firmer.<sup>4</sup>

It cannot but be observed that the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and of the

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<sup>1</sup> The text of this statute was published in the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*, Vol. XIV, No. 2.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> This body, which had the right of administrative exile, was abolished by an Edict of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, September 1, 1953.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. standing committees, specially set up to exercise powers of judicial review of judgments in the lower courts.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> A sketch of how the improvements work is given in the next article.—Ed.

Union and Autonomous Republics<sup>5</sup> are not yet fully performing all the duties imposed on them as legislative bodies by the Soviet Constitutions. Up to this day, for example, such important acts, constitutionally provided for, as a law on the manner of recall of deputies, a statute on Autonomous Regions and National Areas,<sup>6</sup> an act on the budgetary rights of the USSR and the Union Republics, and many others, have not been adopted.<sup>7</sup>

The Constitution of the USSR presupposes a well-integrated system of public authority: yet the rights and obligations of the various government institutions have been insufficiently clearly delimited. This applies particularly to the Union-Republican Ministries of the USSR and the corresponding Ministries in the Union Republics.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly unsettled is the question of the competence of the local Soviets of Working People's Deputies. The statutes dealing with various local organs of public authority, issued twenty years ago, no longer reflect the present tasks of these bodies. Regulations governing the relationship between local Soviets and executive committees on the one hand and enterprises or institutions subject to the central government on the other are also lacking. Yet clearly observance of the law requires clarity and precision in the apportionment of rights and duties among officials and State institutions.

The publication of a number of laws provided for in the Constitution of the USSR, said K. E. Voroshilov at the twentieth Congress of the CPSU, would substantially improve Soviet legislation and be an important means of further strengthening the observance of law.

The Soviet press has already underlined the necessity of extensive codification of the various branches of law. This would also promote its improvement and bring it into keeping with the requirements of the Constitution.

In order that legality may prevail, it is not only good laws that are needed but also people well equipped to fulfil them. Therefore the scrupulous training of personnel in the public service is required, in a spirit of profound understanding of Leninist principles of legality, in a spirit of socialist justice, respect for Soviet laws and the socialist way of life; coupled with the explanation to the mass of the people and wide acceptance of the ideas of socialist legality. Considerable educational work is needed to develop confidence in the universally binding force of the laws and in creating an atmosphere of intolerance towards breaches of the law. Of considerable importance is the publication of books and pamphlets, written in simple language, which explain existing legislation on questions of collective farm, labour, housing and family law, the struggle against crime, etc. Yet things so far are unsatisfactory as regards the

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<sup>5</sup> The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics consists of fifteen Union Republics, sovereign States which formed a single Union in 1922 but retain in law the right to secede. Within the territory of four of them (Russia, Georgia, Azerbaidjan and Uzbekistan) are seventeen Autonomous Republics, constituted by smaller nationalities.—Ed.

<sup>6</sup> The Union Republics comprise, in addition to the Autonomous Republics 128 administrative territories or regions: and also nine regions which, by virtue of being inhabited by small but distinct nationalities different from those of their respective Union Republics, are constituted as "Autonomous Regions". In the Russian Federation there are also ten "National Areas" comprising very small national groups.—Ed.

<sup>7</sup> After the war, in particular, the Supreme Soviet sessions confined themselves mainly to adopting the fourth five-year plan directives (in 1946), the annual Budgets, and reports on Edicts issued between sessions. A marked improvement took place in 1956. Similarly the second and third (post-war) Supreme Soviets met only five times in four years instead of eight times as laid down by the Constitution: the fourth, elected in 1954, has met six times in under three years.—Ed.

<sup>8</sup> Some Ministries in the Union Government administer the whole public service for which they are responsible through *representatives* in the fifteen Union Republics; they are called "all-Union Ministries". Others—the majority—work through Ministries, bearing the same title, in the Government of the Union Republics; these are called "Union-Republican Ministries".—Ed.



publishing of such literature. The organisation of lectures to popularise Soviet law is also poorly developed.

A considerable part in strengthening socialist legality and the propaganda of Soviet law has to be played by jurists, both theoretical and practical. It has more than once been remarked that Soviet legal studies should be closer to the practical questions of life: they should be developing further the basic problems of the development of Soviet democracy, the observance of legality and the protection of the rights of citizens in every way. In this connection the lagging behind of Soviet constitutional law must be particularly emphasised. The Constitution of the USSR has enriched public law with a number of new conceptions on questions of social structure (such, for example, as the conception of the political foundation and the economic foundation), of state structure, of democratic rights and liberties, of electoral law, etc. But many of these conceptions have not up to the present been developed in the theoretical field to any appreciable extent.

The question of the sovereignty of the Union Republics, and of its relation to the sovereignty of the USSR, is very important. Guided in their national policy by the necessity of attentively reckoning with national differences and peculiarities, ensuring in every possible way the economic and cultural development of the various nations and nationalities, further strengthening the friendship of the peoples, consolidating the National Republics and encouraging still further local creative initiative, the Communist Party and the Soviet State have taken steps to expand the rights of the Union Republics in the economic and cultural fields. The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU fully approved these measures, and declared the necessity of further extending the rights of the Ministries of the various Republics. Accordingly, 1956 saw supplementary measures taken to enhance the role of the Union Republics in the management of the national economy. Undertakings in a number of branches of the national economy were transferred to the Union Republics for management.\*

In order to eliminate unnecessary centralisation, and to increase the role of the Republics in the guidance of their judicial institutions and bodies, the Ministry of Justice of the USSR was abolished, and its functions in relation to guidance of the work of judicial institutions and bodies within the Union Republics were transferred to the Ministers of Justice of the Union Republics themselves. The question of the extension of the rights of the Union Republics and the reinforcement of their sovereignty should command the attention of those engaged in the study of constitutional law.

Questions of the delimitation and relationship between all-Union and Union Republic legislation, of the competence of the highest authorities of State and of the administrative institutions of the Union Republics are also of much importance. Scientific research on these questions would undoubtedly tend to improve the work of particular branches of the machinery of State.

It is essential to devote serious attention to questions of Soviet electoral law. Our legal literature provides more or less satisfactory commentaries on universal, direct and equal franchise with secrecy of ballot. But as regards the right of nominating candidates, and the whole procedure for the organisation and holding of elections, all that has been written amounts to restating the existing electoral regulations. Yet serious and really scientific work on these questions could assist the legislator in discovering the necessary means of improving and perfecting the whole electoral system in our country.

Many questions also arise in connection with the fulfilment of the constitutional provision that deputies shall report to their electors. There often arise in

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\* Over 15,000 enterprises have been so transferred. As a result, output in industries controlled by the Union Republic now constitutes 67% of all industrial output in the Ukraine, 62% in Kazakhstan, 80% in Azerbaidjan, etc.—Ed.



the localities such questions as : How often should reports be made and in what form ? What part should the Soviets and their executive committees play in organising such reports ? What part if any should be played by the voluntary organisations ? How should decisions by the electors, after hearing their deputies, be drawn up ? Those working on the theory of constitutional law should, by studying and drawing conclusions from practical experience, assist in answering all these questions. This would facilitate the further improvement of ties between the Soviets and the mass of citizens, and proper supervision by and reporting to the electors.

The Soviet Constitutions<sup>10</sup> lay down a very important principle, the right of the deputy to address questions to the Government or to a Minister. This should serve as a means of control of the highest representative institutions of the USSR and of the Union and Autonomous Republics over the activity of executive and administrative bodies. True, the right of addressing questions has so far been rarely used at sessions of the Supreme Soviet, yet the study of this question would have much importance for giving practical effect to this right in the future.

The Soviet Constitution likewise establishes the institution of the referendum, which is of great importance in principle as an index of the decisive role of the people in the Soviet State, of the right of the people itself directly to provide answers to most important questions of State. Soviet legal science must help also in the future practice of holding referendums.

From an editorial in *Sovetskoye Gosudarstvo i Pravo*, No. 10, 1956.

## II.

### **Local Government in the Soviet Union**

IT was announced in the Soviet press on December 23, 1956, that the elections to local soviets in the USSR will take place during the first two weeks in March 1957.\* The two-year term of office from the last election in February/March 1955 will then have expired and over 1,500,000 local councillors will be elected throughout the Union.

These elections will raise once again in the world press the question of democracy in the Soviet Union. This question will be debated more keenly than ever because of the recent developments in the people's democracies and also because of recent developments inside the Soviet Union. This will be the first formal review of the reactions of the Soviet population to the events of 1956, many of which have substantially increased the importance of the work of the local soviets and of the local councillors.

I spent some eight weeks in the Soviet Union in September and October 1956, investigating the work of the local soviets in the Russian, Ukrainian and Georgian Republics. Before I went I had read what literature there is available in this country on Soviet local government, because local government is one of my main academic interests. Since September 1956 I have been able to read

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<sup>10</sup> Here, as earlier, the article refers to "Constitutions" because, in addition to the constitution of the USSR, each Union Republic has its own constitution, which conforms in general with that of the Union, but may have specific features of its own ; the same applies to the Constitutions of the Autonomous Republics.—ED.

\* At the beginning of 1956 there were 128 soviets of territories or regions—the largest administrative units—and nine of autonomous regions (inhabited by smaller nationalities distinct from the larger nationalities surrounding them), ten of national areas (inhabited by very small nationalities developing from nomadic to socialist conditions), 4,328 of districts (counties), 1,566 of towns (and 489 of wards or districts within the towns) and 50,516 of rural areas (each comprising a number of villages).—ED.

what has been published in the Soviet Union. While I was there I visited the offices of at least one of each type of local soviet, the Russian Republic Ministry most concerned with supervising local government in that Republic and also the head office of the trade union of the staffs of local soviets. For each discussion I had with me cuttings taken from the Soviet press referring to some aspect of the work of the local soviets of the type or area in question and I was able to check the facts reported in these references at first hand.

Coming from the West, I started my investigations with a critical attitude to a system which is markedly different from our own. Yet in spite of differences in the formal structure of the system and of the society in which it operates there appeared a very strong element familiar to students of other local government systems. Everywhere in the world it is difficult to discover sufficient able, public-spirited people to spend their time and energy in the administration of local affairs. Everywhere in the world there is the problem of maintaining a system of local administration with a population which is increasingly mobile, less tied to its locality and moving faster and in ever great numbers from the rural areas into rapidly growing towns. These problems exist very much in the Soviet Union, but nevertheless they have not been the subject of extensive sociological studies by social scientists nearly as much as they have in the West.

In fact, in spite of the almost constant attention to the problems of local soviets in the national and local press in the Soviet Union, there has been little attention to them in academic studies. This seems to be partly due to the fact that they fall indefinitely between the academic interests of the faculties of law and political economy. In the card-index of the Gorky Library of Moscow State University I found only one reference to a post-graduate thesis on local soviets and that, though written after the war, referred only to the work of the local soviets in the period 1923 to 1927. A very full and detailed bibliography, prepared for me by the University Library staff, appeared to contain enough material to occupy a good trained research worker about a month. Of all the hundreds of Soviet novels which have been published since the war I understand that only one makes a serious attempt to feature characters who are local councillors and to deal with their work as an aspect of contemporary Soviet life.

It would be easy to explain this by drawing the conclusion that the whole apparatus of local soviets is a facade to conceal an absence of local democracy, as some enemies of the Soviet Union claim. A reading of the press and an investigation of the soviets at work quickly destroy this view. The explanation in fact seems a little more complex. Anyone familiar with the Webbs' great book, *Soviet Communism*, will remember that they devoted a good deal of the first part of that work to a study of the work of the local soviets. It remains to this day the most detailed discussion of the subject in English, and yet, in spite of the fact that what they described was in the main changed by the developments after the introduction of the new Constitution of 1936, no one has adequately revised their work. In part the Webbs themselves gave an explanation of this when they asserted that "the first step to any competent understanding of what is happening in the USSR" ("the biggest integrated social organisation in the world") is "a comprehensive description of the entire social order of the USSR". They selected four main forms of the organisation of that order: man as a citizen, man as a wealth-producer, man as a consumer, and man as a leader. Much has been written since the war about the changes which have occurred in connection with the last three forms and a good deal has been written about the changes which have taken place in the central government apparatus. It is in these areas that the major post-war changes have occurred, and until recently little seemed to be moving in the field of local administration. Nevertheless there are many recent signs that there

will be a greater concern with man as a citizen and with the work of the local soviets.

At the twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union it was decided that the main task in relation to the Soviet regime was to raise the role of local soviets in the economic and cultural life of the country and to make them more democratic. As the first step towards this it was decided to cut out any unnecessary centralisation and to decentralise authority and responsibility as far as possible with full encouragement of initiative on the part of the local councillors.

As an additional step it was decided that it was necessary to ensure the strictest observance of the legal requirements about frequency of meetings of local soviets. In large areas of the Soviet Union in 1955 local soviets had not been convened as frequently as the law requires. Local soviets, according to the type, are required by law to meet once a month, once every two, or once every three months, and in some areas more than half the local soviets were being convened irregularly. In the first eight months of 1956 (according to data in an article in *Party Life*, September 1956) all local soviets were convened within the legal time-limits, with the few exceptions of some reorganised rural soviets.

The most common explanation given for these irregularities has been that meetings are deferred because there has not been enough time to prepare reports and proposals for an adequate discussion of the topics on the agenda. It is also evident that the soviets have almost all suffered seriously from the disorganisation of war-time and the lack of people with long and continuous experience of their working. Not a single person among the staff and councillors I talked to had had experience of the work of the soviets before the war. They appeared on average to be in their third or fourth two-year term, and it takes a good deal of time to gain the necessary experience of the law and methods of work for the machinery to work at full efficiency. There has obviously been a tendency to over-prepare the material for meetings with formal set speeches and reports. The current trend is away from this to a much more informal factual report and free discussion. This was clearly evident at a meeting of one of the district soviets in Moscow which I attended.

At the same time the quality of the elected councillors and of the staff is rising rapidly, especially in the rural soviets, which have over 1,000,000 councillors. Whereas in 1950 very few of the rural councillors had had a secondary education (about 70 per cent were agricultural workers), by 1956 the number of technically qualified people (like agronomists, engineers and teachers) who were serving on rural soviets had increased substantially. The staff of the rural and district soviets are very few (many rural soviets have not more than half a dozen), but they are much more able than they were because either they have been replaced by younger trained people or they have themselves undergone three- or six-month courses at regional or republic schools.

In fact the quality of the councillors and staff of rural soviets has been raised to the point where it is being seriously debated whether some of the more mechanical functions they now perform could be removed, which would allow them more time to exercise the increased powers which have recently been conferred on them. They have been given greater financial powers and more precise responsibilities in dealing with the collective farms in their areas. The collective farms now have a much greater measure of freedom in planning their crop programmes and this in turn affects the powers of both the rural and district soviets. Yet a good deal of the time and energies of rural councillors is now taken up with the mechanical task of collecting the republic's revenues.

A district soviet which I investigated in Georgia covers an area of 125,000 square kilometres, with a population of 56,000. Its powers have been sub-

stantially increased in that, for example, it can now undertake, without express higher authority, expenditure on building up to 250,000 roubles for any single project, where previously it was limited to 50,000 roubles. With such a higher sum it is possible to build a small hospital or a junior school. In the case of the town soviets there has been a much greater delegation of authority in that the limits on building projects have been raised from 100,000 roubles to 1,500,000 roubles, and for this latter sum a sizeable block of flats can be built.

These increases in power will throw a great weight on the shoulders of the elected councillors since the staff employed, even in a large town soviet, is considerably less than the number of elected councillors. It is startling to find in a country which seems preoccupied with the dangers of bureaucracy that the total membership of the trade union for all the administrative workers of both central and local administrative organs is under 700,000. (This is roughly equal to the combined totals of administrative and clerical staffs in British central and local government offices, but excluding those of the nationalised industries.)

The main burden of the day-to-day administrative work falls on the shoulders of the small elected executive committees of the local soviets. Up to about a dozen members are elected to serve on the executive committees from among the elected councillors at the first session of the new soviet. The chairman and secretary are paid a salary (which seemed low by professional standards), and they are fully employed in directing the work of the soviet. The committee usually meets once a fortnight and takes the main executive decisions. Each soviet also elects standing committees, and usually there is at least one for each department of the work of the local soviet. About a half of the councillors are elected as members of one or another standing committee, and the remainder usually assist one or more committees as "activists", publicising the work and collecting information from the electorate. They meet as often as work demands, but the usual practice seems to be once or twice a month. The committees have no executive power but are intended to investigate the work of their department (they often meet as a body in an institution under the authority of their department) and make reports on their inspections, together with recommendations, to the executive committee and/or to the full session of the soviet.

Examples of this work may be found in the report of the Chairman of the Health Committee of the Stalin District Soviet, Tbilisi, which was published in *Izvestia* on July 10, 1956. Members of the committee, with the help and advice of the staffs of the Institutes of Labour and Hygiene, visited the main factories in the district during the previous year to investigate the sanitary arrangements and general working conditions of the employees. As a result of the visits to the Worsted Mills in this district a report was made by the committee to the executive committee of the soviet recommending that improvements be made in lighting, ventilation and the clothing guards attached to the machines. In addition as a result of inspections of the meat, dairy and poultry markets a report was made to the executive committee of the soviet, which issued orders to the director of the market to make specified repairs and improvements.

Perhaps the thorniest topic connected with local soviets is the fact that almost invariably only one candidate is nominated for the election in each electoral district. There is no legal requirement that there may be only one candidate, and the constitution of 1936 does not appear to have provided for the pre-selection of candidates. I discussed this matter with almost all the people I met. My first stock question to each councillor I spoke with was: "How were you selected as a candidate?" The electoral commissions (in which Communist Party members seem to be in a minority) allocate to the

main organisations within the district the right to nominate members for consideration at a mass meeting held in the premises of the principal organisation within the district. If there is a large factory or hospital or administrative office in an electoral district, it seems that the decisive voice about who is selected lies with the staff of that undertaking. For example, one councillor with whom I discussed this matter told me she was a doctor nominated by the hospital staff in her district. Usually, she said, there was a fairly obvious choice of one person who was most interested in and able to do the particular job of councillor. In her case seven proposals were made for three candidates (one each for the district, town and regional soviets). It had taken two full evenings of discussion at the mass meeting to reduce the number to three. I asked her why the seven had not been put forward to let the electors make the choice at the election. She argued against this on two connected grounds. First, she was convinced that the people best informed about a candidate's abilities were those in daily contact with him or her at work. Second, she said, any alternative would open the way for demagogues, place-seekers and careerists to win their way on to the councils. Another councillor who put forward a similar argument added that it was already difficult to find 1,500,000 candidates. He suggested that already in practice all sections of Soviet society worthy of representation were represented on the local councils. He suggested that nothing would be gained by allowing anyone to stand for election, since no one would feel it was worth while to compete against a candidate who the vast majority had already agreed was the best candidate.

My conclusion from these discussions was that the arguments were valid for the present situation for the large electoral districts, for district, regional and republic elections. But I was left with the impression that the arguments grow increasingly weaker for election to village and town soviets. It is in these areas that personalities will be known to the mass of the electorate, and there is a good deal to be said for allowing the selection to be made by secret ballot. At present it seems inconceivable that the larger social organisations would find themselves in unresolvable disagreement over the nominations of candidates and insist on their own nominee standing against the other. In the electoral systems of the West it is only in the smaller electoral areas that the independent candidate stands a significant chance. Without the endorsement of a large social organisation in a large constituency no candidate stands a serious chance of election. In the Soviet Union, as in some other electoral systems, it is still possible for the elector to write in the name of an alternative candidate, but in practice it is done there with about the same infrequency as elsewhere.

There is nevertheless much contemporary criticism of the inadequacy of the legal code, which does little to enforce the civic rights of councillors. An article published in *Izvestia* on October 3, 1956, was entitled: "When will there be new regulations for local soviets?" The article points out that the present regulations date from the 1920s, since when the situation has changed radically, and "they are hopelessly out of date". Local soviets have encountered great difficulty in carrying out their work because of the inadequacy of the regulations, especially in determining relations between local soviets and other bodies. Can a local soviet legally force a factory to install adequate baths for employees engaged on dirty work? The regulations do not clearly empower a local soviet to do this. The need is recognised, and new draft regulations are in preparation.

Most of the Republics have produced regulations for the standing committees of local soviets, but so far there have been no such regulations for the Russian Republic. The current trend towards strengthening legal guarantees of civic rights suggests that high priority will be given to such elementary matters as the legal provisions for a quorum at the meetings of soviets, their



executive committees and standing committees. Even more important, it is necessary to ensure that councillors have a guaranteed formal right to put questions to members of the local standing committees and get an answer within a time-limit (cf. for example the provisions which do exist for comparable relations in the republic and union soviets). These regulations are in preparation, and their enactment will go a long way to make universal the practices which I observed do exist in the best examples already. In this connection it is necessary to remember how relatively new are the soviets, which have only been operating effectively in their present form since about 1947. Much remains to be done to improve them, and the healthiest sign that much is being done is the developing attention which is paid to them in the Soviet press.

MAURICE HOOKHAM.

### Bibliography on Russian Local Government

(All books in Russian)

The best recent discussions of the role of local government in the Soviet Union are in:

**A. F. Gorkin**—lecture entitled *The Party and the Soviets*, given to the Higher Party School, Moscow, 1955.

**B. Kozlov**—article entitled *Some Questions about the Work of Soviets*, in *Party Life*, September 1956.

**U. V. Todorsky**—*Standing Committees of Local Soviets*, Moscow, 1955.

**L. A. Trigoriant**—*Sessions of Local Soviets*, Moscow, 1956.

On rural soviets:

**N. Staravoirov**—*Organisational Mass Work of Rural Soviets*, Moscow, 1955.

On town soviets:

**A. V. Luzhin**—*Town Soviets*, Moscow, 1954.

### III.

### Democracy in the Soviet Local Press

“**L**ACK of space, that’s the trouble”, the editor said. “By the time we’ve printed all the criticisms and publicised the shortcomings, we’ve no space left for the really important news of the day!”

I met this particular editor in Rostov-on-Don. His words do not merely underline the still serious paper shortage in the USSR; they also convey fairly accurately the current order of priority in the selection of material for publication in the local papers of the USSR.

To one whose acquaintance with Soviet journalism had hitherto been largely limited to the central newspapers and a handful of magazines, this vigorous and flourishing local press came as something of a surprise; and a very pleasant one.

What, precisely, do I mean by “local press”? First, there are the regional daily newspapers—several thousand of them, usually published jointly by the region’s local government authorities and the Communist Party. Then there are many thousands of other papers: youth papers, published by the Komsomol (Young Communist League), their influence extending far beyond the youth movement; town, village, farm, mine, factory and construction site papers, usually published two or three times a week (though the largest are dailies) and ranging in size from a doubled foolscap sheet to four *Pravda*-size\* pages; and—not least in importance—the sharply satirical wall newspapers,

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\* Roughly equivalent to ordinary full-size British newspaper pages.—J.B.



which are to be found in almost every enterprise and institution, and also along the main streets and in the parks of most towns.

Here I shall largely confine myself to the regional newspapers (plus a few words on the training of journalists in the Soviet Union).

I do so for several reasons : firstly because the regional papers are, of course, by far the most important in circulation and resources ; secondly because (in my view) for a long time to come the improvement, enlargement and development of these papers will be the most significant trend in the Soviet press ; and thirdly because there is little difference in principle between the attitude, aims and approach of these newspapers and their smaller contemporaries.

The regional papers, of course, have bigger staffs, more money and paper, wider facilities, and greater technical resources. But the staff, say, of the *Urals Worker*, the Sverdlovsk regional daily with a circulation of 170,000 ; of *Autozavodets*, circulation 12,000, published three times a week at the Gorky Motor Works ; of *The Acorn*, circulation 500, published weekly on an Abkhazian state farm in the North Caucasus ; or of the poster-size Komsomol wall-newspaper in the park at Novorossiisk, would all agree on their general function, purpose, aims and point of view.

Let us return, then, to the *Urals Worker*, with its four big pages and its 170,000 circulation, which covers the Urals engineering city of Sverdlovsk (population 707,000) and the surrounding region.

The *Urals Worker* appears six times a week. It is well printed—much better printed than most of the central Soviet newspapers, incidentally.\* It is lively and adequately illustrated.

Its full-time editorial staff of nineteen consists mostly of youngsters who have graduated from the journalism departments of colleges or universities within the last few years. The paper also has more than 250 “worker correspondents” on its books—ordinary farm and factory workers who send regular reports on what is going on around them. And its “letters to the editor” department is also very important, as we shall see.

How do these journalists see themselves ? What do they consider to be the job of the *Urals Worker* ? Are they there simply to convey news ?

The answer to this, emphatically, is “No !”

Like every other Soviet journalist with whom I have discussed the question, these youngsters see the press as much more than merely a means of conveying news, or even of commenting upon it. They see their newspapers as a weapon—and a sharp one at that—in the battle to build communism.

And so the *Urals Worker* campaigns for the fulfilment of plans, does everything it can to educate and train its readers in the spirit of socialism and (a very important aspect of its work indeed) to draw more and more of them into public activity.

Adding this to the fact, already mentioned, that these regional newspapers are usually published jointly by the local government and party organisations, it may occur to some readers to anticipate that they will limit themselves to eulogies of all and everything in the Soviet way of life in general, and the local Soviet way of life in particular.

This, however, is most definitely *not* the case ; and—at least as far as the local way of life is concerned—never has been.

Of course, up and down the country, it is possible to find local papers which are dull, unimaginative, stereotyped, sycophantic. But no one who studies a representative selection of these papers can doubt that the vast majority are vigorous and hard-hitting, well aware of the realities of the situation and with-

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\* It is interesting to note that the local Sverdlovsk editions of *Pravda* and *Izvestia* are printed (from matrices flown from Moscow) on the same machines as the *Urals Worker*. The result, however, is a much better looking job than the same papers printed in Moscow.—J.B.

out any inhibitions at all about attacking those local personalities or organisations which in their opinion "suffer from shortcomings".

This, of course, is no contradiction. If the newspaper genuinely wants the plans to be carried out successfully it must draw prompt attention to any mistakes and weaknesses (not to mention downright 'dirty work!') it encounters. It must seize upon every worthwhile example of rank-and-file initiative, encourage it and do what it can to spread it. And if, as happens all too often, progressive ideas meet with a lukewarm reception from conservatively minded officials, then it is the paper's job to battle until the new ideas have won their way through the seas of ink and inertia.

This brings us back to the opening paragraph of the article. In its eagerness for "criticism and self-criticism", the local press today tends to devote its sharply limited space to local (and not only local) weaknesses and failures, sometimes to the exclusion of news of really important successes and advances!

At Sverdlovsk the reporters talked eagerly of their triumphs in dealing with local shortcomings.

A secondary school headmaster had just been dismissed as a result of complaints made by parents to the paper, which were then investigated and publicised in its columns. They had just taken up the case of a man unjustly sacked from a local state farm. He had as a result been reinstated with back pay. The paper was also campaigning on many local issues, notably housing. And not always did it see eye to eye with the local authorities.

In all this the paper's 250 "worker-correspondents" play a part which it is difficult to overestimate. On the spot with a full understanding of the background, they are aware of what is going on (and, even more so, of what is going wrong) long before the most expert visiting journalist could hope to sense anything at all.

More than half the editorial wages bill at the *Urals Worker* goes to pay for contributions received from these spare-time correspondents. This figure shows more clearly than any words their really major importance in the opinion of Soviet editors.

"Letters to the editor" are also of growing significance. Newspapers throughout the country do everything they can to stimulate readers to write to them—a relatively new habit for the Soviet people. After all, literacy itself is relatively recent, too.

By western standards the *Urals Worker's* postbag is still small, therefore—about 100 letters a day. They are carefully registered, and then even more carefully read and discussed in the editorial department.

Action of one sort or another is taken on every single complaint or criticism made in these letters. In many instances, of course, publication of the letter is all that is necessary. Remaining letters are dealt with in one of two ways. Either they are sent for an explanation to the officials or organisations criticised or staff reporters themselves investigate the complaint.

In either case the newspaper's object is not merely to "get the story". If the complaint proves to be justified, the paper feels equally its responsibility to see that the situation is put right.

What happens if letters forwarded to "the appropriate authority" are ignored? The *Urals Worker* deals with such cases in a brutally simple manner. First, a polite reminder. Then, usually, a second (not quite so polite) reminder. Finally, if there is still silence, the paper prints the original letter with an editorial note explaining that the department or individual concerned refuses to make any comment.

"That usually gets results all right", the assistant editor commented.

In any event, the original letter writer is kept fully informed of what is going on.

To my mind, the important thing here is not so much the procedure as the fact that *every* letter received is dealt with in a responsible way. Every complaint *must* be investigated and the results made public if the complaint is proved to be justified.

The potential importance of this as a weapon against bureaucracy, corruption or obstructive practices of all kinds is fairly obvious. The worker, the factory, the local councillor—individuals or groups of all kinds, indeed—now have a remedy if attempts to rectify weaknesses through “the usual channels” fail. Now they can simply write to the papers about it, confident of finding powerful allies.

This is indeed happening.

Stalingrad construction site workers wrote jointly to the press, complaining about shortages in the supply of cement. The management of a Urals ball-bearing factory wrote to a leading technical paper because the Ministry rejected designs for a new, more economical, ball-race. Kharkov building workers criticised failure to use local supplies of raw materials. These were all cases I encountered personally. “Very well, we’ll write to the paper!” is a remark which must increasingly strike terror into the hearts of officialdom these days.

Of course, there are still many things to be criticised in Soviet local journalism. Chief among them I would put the limited and oversimplified reporting of foreign affairs; and the appalling inadequacy of the *technical* training received by journalists.

Paper shortage, too, still harshly limits both the size and number of papers, as well as circulation. The *Urals Worker*—which is the main local daily for a population of roughly 1,000,000—as already mentioned has a circulation limited to 170,000.\* The editor declares that he could easily at once boost his sales by 100,000 if enough paper were available. Certainly I saw for myself that it disappeared from the bookstalls often within minutes of being put on sale.

And, even when very little space is devoted to advertisements, four pages are not much with a world to cover!

To some extent this shortage is offset by the display of copies on roadside boards. Several families, too, often share a copy.

Paper shortage also limits the number of new publications. There is a considerable demand for more—particularly evening papers. By the time you read this, it is probable that Sverdlovsk will have won this particular battle, and begun publication of an evening edition of the *Urals Worker*—evidence, at least, that the shortage is gradually being overcome.

For foreign news, Soviet newspapers largely depend on the *Tass* agency, apart from occasional articles written by local people who travel abroad. However excellent this *Tass* service may be, features from a single source cannot hope to give the many-sided picture.

This point was universally conceded when I raised it, but personally I did not find any great concern expressed about it. All agreed that it would be “a fine thing” if every big paper could have its own correspondents abroad; but in most cases they saw this as a very long-term project indeed. Certainly it presupposes a very much greater supply of competent journalists (and foreign currency) than is at present available; and more space in which to report them, for at present these papers can spare only very limited space for detailed material from other parts of the world.

Finally, training in journalism. Today editorial staffs are being recruited, almost exclusively, from the young people graduating from the journalism departments of the universities and journalism courses at colleges and institutes.

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\* The local editions of *Pravda* and *Izvestia* in Sverdlovsk have a present circulation of 210,000 each.—J.B.

These courses cover five years, and in many ways are excellent and thorough. Their great and overriding weakness, however, is that they give the student almost no instruction in the special techniques of his craft. For example, this year, the journalism department of Leningrad University has included shorthand and typewriting in its syllabus for the first time. Even so, at present the student is only able to take one or the other of these subjects. Students assured me that "next year" both would be obligatory—but the heads of the faculty were not nearly so certain (or so enthusiastic) about it.

Typography and layout, too, remain very nearly a closed book.

"Too many telephones and not enough typewriters" is the way the editorial secretary of the *Evening Moscow* summed up the situation in his own office. It is almost universal practice for reporters to dictate their stories to stenographers, either over the phone or in person. Any journalist knows the effect this can be guaranteed to have on the writer's style!

Against this it must be conceded that the course embraces a great deal of useful practical work. Students spend months working on local newspapers all over the country, doing every job in turn from reporting to working on the "stone". And the student gets an admirable literary training, and an essential grounding in the politics and economics of his country.

The economic life of the Soviet Union, its economy and agriculture are studied seriously and thoroughly—the point being that if the youngsters are, largely, going to write and help form opinion on these matters it is not really a bad idea for them to know what they are talking about!

Additionally, each student is expected to specialise in some particular branch of economic life, so that he can write on at least one subject with real authority.

All this is giving the Soviet journalist's articles a value and a prestige not always accorded to (or deserved by) the works of his colleagues overseas; it is all the more pity, therefore, that his style is sometimes verbose and flamboyant, and his material displayed in an unimaginative way.

The average Soviet journalist is well aware that his press suffers from technical shortcomings. He is keenly interested in foreign journalistic techniques and eager to take any opportunities—still sadly rare—of studying them.

"We've got to make our paper more *interesting*" was the general and immediate reply at the *Urals Worker* when I asked what their most serious problem was. These words were echoed in talks up and down the country—in Stalingrad and Rostov-on-Don, at Tashkent and Tbilisi, at Leningrad and Sebastopol.

"Make our paper more interesting!" In general, the Soviet journalist is beginning to do so. But in any case he is already doing an excellent job of stirring people up, and encouraging them to think, to write, and to struggle.

**JOHN BORDEN.**

*Mr. Borden, whose main work is concerned with presenting factual information on the Soviet Union, has recently spent three months in the USSR making a study of the press.*

# A S I Moscow Letter

## DISCUSSIONS OF "NOT BY BREAD ALONE"

Ralph Parker

ONE evening last autumn the fiction section of the Soviet Writers' Union organised a discussion on a new novel that had been serialised in the literary magazine *Novy Mir*. Similar discussions are held frequently, and this time the organisers saw no reason for any special arrangements. True, the conference hall the writers are using, in the former Freemasons' Lodge on Vorovsky Street, until their new headquarters are built, seats no more than 200; but the novel under discussion was the first work of a young author, and nothing untoward was expected. However, this was a grave miscalculation. Long before the meeting was due to open, a large crowd had assembled on the pavement outside the doors of the club, and by seven o'clock the place was under siege. A cry of "the back door" set a crowd of critics and writers surging into the yard. Someone found a ladder and clambered up it to occupy a strategic post outside the ventilation window of the hall. Even the young author himself, Vladimir Dudintsev, had to be hoisted into the building over people's shoulders.

Thus began the nation-wide discussion of *Not By Bread Alone*, which must be considered the main literary event of the autumn of 1956\*. And not only literary. At times the debate on Dudintsev's controversial novel assumed a political character. Rightly or wrongly, the public—especially the younger generation—hailed this book as an onslaught on certain features of social life, discontent with which had been growing steadily since the twentieth Congress earlier in the year.

*Not By Bread Alone* is a long, ill-constructed, often tedious novel, which abounds in truthfully drawn scenes and characters belonging to a period from which the Soviet public feels itself to be emerging. It is because, in their new advance, people are able to look back to the period 1945-53 with a certain amount of detachment that their reading of *Not By Bread Alone* is accompanied by such mental jottings as "Yes, it is true: I remember it was like that"; or "Yes, that explains why so-and-so happened". These are the real test of literary veracity. To that extent, Dudintsev's novel is a document of the times; another reason for its popularity is that it is rarely didactic and that its plot has those adventure-story elements that have been lacking from most Soviet books in recent years.

*Not By Bread Alone* is the story of a man with an original idea and enough perseverance to fight for that idea against conservatism, vested interests and a powerful bureaucracy. Though he fights virtually alone, he is sustained by the kindness and charity of people almost as lonely as himself. Indeed, perhaps the real quality of this novel lies in the author's passionate plea for fraternity, a quality sadly lacking in the human relations between his opponents—ambitious managers, jealous scientists, scheming bureaucrats and heartless fine-weather friends.

Lopatkin is a self-taught scientist, a factory worker who qualified as a physicist while working at the bench and who therefore struggled for his invention not only because he knew that it was scientifically progressive, but because, as a "man of production", he was shocked by the old wasteful methods which

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\* See extract published in *SCR Education Bulletin*, Vol. 3, Nos. 3/4.



his own invention could correct. For him, his centrifugal pipe-casting machine meant quicker building, cheaper houses. For his opponents, however, for Drozdov the middle-aged factory manager who became a ministerial worker, for his protector Shutikov, for a host of scientific workers in the factory and ministry labs, the Lopatkin machine was not a potential means of aiding socialist construction but a real threat to their own plans and reputations, and to counter this threat they made full use of the arbitrary powers they possessed during the period Dudintsev is describing.

Speakers at the writers' discussion of this bold book were quick to point out that the Drozdovs of this world were cynics who had established a table of rank, within which some people had the right to break standards of Soviet ethics. Such behaviour sapped the ordinary man's faith in justice. In the changed circumstances of today, however, authors were not afraid to show up the Drozdovs and the Shutikovs. "Dudintsev", said one participant in the discussion, "has expressed the concern each of us feels for the honour of Soviet man. His is the merciless truth we need." Another said: "It is wrong to assume that the Drozdovs are not as dangerous today as they were in the past. This book is a serious warning that having taken one step we must take another. We all know it was the twentieth Congress that gave us the opportunity to write freely and describe the Drozdovs still in our midst." "I read Dudintsev's novel with enormous delight and in great excitement", said the writer Vsevolod Ivanov. "I would like to remark on the author's attempt to follow the traditions of classical Russian literature, notably of Gogol. These traditions are manifested by the portrayal of the ordinary little man who, though plunged into calamities, doggedly and selflessly keeps on doing a great thing for the benefit of society. The novel is full of love for man, of real respect for the ordinary little man."

Much of the discussion turned on the character of Drozdov, and the author was criticised for not showing his readers how this anti-social type was formed as a disastrous result of the Stalin personality cult. "It is hard to detect his true nature. He is energetic, he fulfils the plan. He has the language, the habits and the appearance of an authoritative, well-intentioned economic executive. People find him affable; even the reader does so at first. Only gradually, as the author elaborates his subtle analysis and dissects the character, does the true nature of Drozdov finally stand bared in all its nakedness before us. But how did he appear? How could such a character appear in our society? Those questions the author does not answer." The writer Mikhalkov spoke of the host of facts Bulganin and Khrushchov had adduced in their criticism of indifferent bureaucrats impeding technical progress and the development of mass initiative. "It is real people who stand behind all these facts. It is of these people, of their life and work, of their fight against conservatism and bureaucracy, that Dudintsev writes." "The time of the personality cult", said Vera Ketlinskaya, "witnessed the appearance in our creative practices of a whole series of wrong theories and concepts, which also permeated our criticism. Some of those wrong theories inspire the critics hostile to this book, critics who insist that the conflict must resolve itself in a happy ending, or who accuse the author of showing a wrong balance of forces. . . . The front-rankers building communism are really very fine people. Then, such comrades say, praise them, and go easy with all the rest, with those who hinder them. What is the result? Evil seems puny and easily conquered, while the bureaucrats, men without principles, time-servers, careerists and scoundrels actually get a free hand. Behind the broad back of the real hero of our times they do their stuff on the quiet. When works containing trenchant criticism and essentially critical remarks are written, or a negative character is introduced, they are the first to shout out at once that it is not typical, that it is a distortion of reality. . . . It has been said that literature should educate and should therefore provide fine



models. This is true, but the point is that if the actual model presented is divorced from real living struggle it does not educate."

The favourable view on *Not By Bread Alone* shared by almost all writers at this discussion was also expressed in *Trud*, the central organ of the trade union movement. Replying to critics who "are overawed by the depth of portrayal of negative phenomena in Dudintsev's novel", *Trud* said: "Does not Dudintsev break with the optimistic tradition of our literature? they ask. A baseless fear! Provided, of course, that what we mean by optimism is not the ability to beat the drum no matter what, but the militant traits of revolutionary ideology, the fight for life, confidence in the future. This militant, poignant novel has rendered a good service to our society."

A month passed before the critics began to draw serious attention to defects in Dudintsev's novel. The Leningrad critic B. Platonov, in an article entitled *Real Heroes and Literary Stunts*, examined the author's treatment of his hero Lopatkin. "In portraying his positive heroes Dudintsev seeks to adopt Gorky's tradition of dealing with 'small men' and their great work. . . . He guides himself by Gorky's famous formula: 'The madness of the brave is the wisdom of life'. But this contrasting the 'madness of the brave' with the 'common sense' of the man in the street is not his only aesthetic problem. The other is whether the 'madness of the brave' is the only and the highest wisdom of life. To this question the novel does not offer any clear answer. . . . Asceticism is heroic when it is necessary in the struggle for a lofty social ideal; it is ugly when it is not dictated by the necessity of such struggle. In *Not By Bread Alone* the heroes find themselves isolated not only from the vulgar rabble, but also from simple normal human beings. . . . There are no normal connections between Lopatkin and the public collective in the novel. . . . Treading his difficult path with a 'burning light', the hero meets with the support of other 'individuals' similar to himself."

It was the author's emphasis on the individualistic nature of Lopatkin's struggle that aroused concern in an *Izvestia* critic too. "Why does not the novel reflect the main element that begets the insurmountable power of the Soviet people: their collectivism, their unity? Like his hero, the author has failed to see and understand the power of the Soviet collective. In the author's indignant imagination, the figures of the bureaucrats and careerists have grown to giant dimensions, overshadowing the bright and solid world of Soviet reality, our complex, effervescent day of toil, full of struggle and victories." A similar note was struck in a reader's letter to *Trud*: "Have we no public organisations, the Party, trade unions, the Komsomol? Could not this force have been shown in the novel in all its might? What is shown is an isolated inventor, and on top of all this we see—in the last pages of the novel—the triumphant scoundrels mocking Lopatkin."

Finally, at the end of December, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, in a leading article, tried to get the agitation that has arisen round this novel into perspective with other trends in recent Soviet writing. Referring to the discussions and debates that have been going on in literary life since the twentieth Congress, the writers' paper draws attention to two tendencies. There were people, it said, who in the struggle against the effects of the personality cult failed to see the tremendous successes of the Soviet land, won in hard trials under the leadership of the Communist Party. There were also exponents of a tendency to measure literary phenomena with the old yardsticks. The former expressed a nihilistic approach to everything achieved by the Soviet people, the latter led to sectarianism and dogmatism. "Dudintsev's novel has evoked vehement disputes, has attracted many readers by its passionate criticism, by the portrayal of Drozdovism. But despite the novel's merits, the constructive element is submerged by the endless sufferings of the isolated inventor, who appears to us as a sort of martyr."

There, for the time being, the controversy rests. People are asking whether *Not By Bread Alone* will appear in book form, and whether, if it does, it will appear in a different form than the *Novy Mir* version. Meanwhile, however, the three issues of the magazine which carried the serial are keenly sought after, and a reading public of many millions has come to think of many aspects of life today and in the immediate past in terms of "Drozdovism".

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# "THE FLIGHT OF SOUL SO FULL"

## *Reflections on the Bolshoi Ballet at Croydon*

AS an epigraph to my article, *Critics' Confusion about the Bolshoi Ballet*, in the last issue of the ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL, I used Madame Rambert's very apt remark: "The Italians have *bel canto*, the Russians have *bella danza*." On further reflection it occurs to me that her appraisal must be qualified, because the dance in Soviet ballet has something more than the *bel canto* kind of beauty.

When Chaliapin made his debut at *La Scala* in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, an Italian critic wrote, in *Corriere della Sera*: "Finding in this music none of those forms which we used to regard as necessary for dramatic opera, we are now lost in the midst of the ruins of our aesthetics, crushed by the might of the art which has unfolded itself before us with an extraordinary creative force and penetration." Another critic echoed in *Secolo*: "Where and when could dramatic music pass with such great art and consistency from comedy to tragedy and show by means of such simple and expressive sounds all the horrors of remorse?"

The Bolshoi Company's visit has shown a similar dramatic quality in ballet, and its impact will be felt for many a day.

*La bella danza* of the Russians does not always express drama, but it always contains that inimitable quality which Pushkin defined as "the flight of the Russian Terpsichore, of soul so full."

The dances shown at Croydon did not tell a story, although some of them had a dramatic element, like the strikingly beautiful romantic Georgian dance, performed by Koren and Zoyagina with a dignity of bearing that reflected the grandeur of the Caucasus itself. Then, of course, there is the immortal *Dying Swan*. It is difficult, if not impossible, to compare objectively the beauty of the images created by Pavlova and Ulanova. The conception is different; it becomes a matter of personal preference. It is nonsense to maintain that Fokine's version is so beautiful that it is impossible to give another. Renaissance artists painted different compositions on a similar theme, and we have different versions created by the same master—the two paintings of the Madonna of the Rocks by Leonardo come immediately to mind. There is all the more reason why choreography may be varied; it cannot be hung on the wall like a painting, and we have many instances of revisions of classical ballets.

It would be fair perhaps to say that Ulanova's swan is more heroic in its struggle with death, as if it finds exaltation in the last act of life. Pavlova's swan was equally poignant but less defiant. Both moved exquisitely, but Ulanova's arms suggested more realistically the beating of the wings—a complete bird-illusion. No dancer has ever achieved such magic. Pavlova's arm movements were expressive of resignation rather than of tragic triumph. The end in Ulanova's creation is quite different from Fokine's, but both are equally effective.

During the evening at Croydon we had plenty of examples of the great advances made by Soviet choreographers. Balanchine, one of the most progressive ballet-masters of the Russian school in the west, has serious limitations in that his creativeness does not delve deeper than the invention of formal movements which fuse rhythmically with the music; he never expresses the content. He and his imitators have never achieved the lyrical beauty of the choreographic pattern we saw in *Melody*, danced by Kondratieva and Fadeychev. These two fine artists gave a melody of lines, sang with their whole bodies, to Gluck's

“Elysian Fields” music. The aerial support was breathtaking, and who can forget the wonderful finale? Kondratieva was carried off stage in a single-handed “lift”, drifting away like a wisp of cloud.

*Spring Water*, danced by Bogomolova and Vlasov to the music of Rakhmaninov, is another melody of the dance, a modern choreographic design drawn in the air by a young couple whose figures appeared to have been sculptured by a Grecian chisel and whose lightness made us forget their materiality and element of weight.

The variations from *Laurencia* are a modern masterpiece, stylised within the tradition of classical ballet, and yet grasping with a subtle sense of national colour the very spirit of the Spanish dance. These difficult variations were performed with incredible *élévation*, floating *grands jetés* and a proud poise of the head by Timofeyeva, who at the age of twenty has already become Semenova’s worthy successor. Her dancing is modelled on that great ballerina’s style.

The *Gavotte* by Lully was danced by Chadereyeva with exquisite grace and nostalgic charm, but Struchkova’s performance of this dance two years before was more beautiful. In the *pas de deux* from *Casse Noisette*, Chistova gave the impression of touching the stage only from time to time, so that she seemed to be dancing off the ground. Her partner Khokhlov is a superb exponent of the classical style. Aurora’s *Rose adagio* from *The Sleeping Beauty* was executed by Karelskaya with impeccable classical purity and effortless grace. The line of her *arabesque* moves in Russian style, with concave back. Her *tours*, supported by each of her four suitors, are clear-cut and perfectly steady. There is none of the loss of balance so often seen in the third or fourth tour. Her four cavaliers were no mere supporting partners; each was playing an integral part in the choreographic scene.

The two outstanding solo national dances, defying the law of gravity, were Farmanyants’s Ukrainian dance from *Taras Bulba* and Yagudin’s dance of the Bashkiri, to which nationality he belongs. Koren’s Spanish dance quite failed to catch the style of Spanish dancers. The steps were Spanish, but his bearing was not. Nevertheless, it refuted Madame Danilova’s scornful remark about the Bolshoi’s alleged ignorance of Spanish dances: “What do they know of these?” *Mercédès*, from *Don Quixote*, is, of course, a mock-Spanish dance, stylised according to the canons of the traditional classical ballet, and, as seen through the eyes of Petipa, who had lived three years in Spain, is genuine. No one could dance it better to the music of Minkas than Zvyagina, but the superb Spanish dance in the Bolshoi’s *Swan Lake* eclipses it. Other national dances (Rumanian, performed by Zangovitch and Sekh; Moldavian by Trembovelskaya, Kamaletdinov and Simachev; and the Polish dances from *Ivan Susanin* by the ensemble) were all distinguished by the intense national colours and the abandon characteristic of the Moiseyev and Beryozka companies.

*The Toys of Viatka*, danced by Popova, Vasiliev and Krameravsky, expressed comically pathetic dolls’ passions—a scene inspired by the Russian puppet theatre.

One of the most outstanding features of the programme was Moszkovsky’s *Waltz*, danced by Struchkova and her magnificent partner Lapauri. Struchkova overcame gravity with the ease of a bird. Such difficult and effective choreography could not be composed outside Russia or danced by any but Soviet artists. First seen by the British public in 1954, it was again enthusiastically applauded and encored. Inability to appreciate its ethereal beauty betrays lack of æsthetic sense. To call it acrobatic or “circus” is to show ignorance of its classical foundation. I do not deny that an acrobatic element can be elevated to the level of fine art, as has been so conclusively proved by the Classical Theatre of China, but the slighting term “circus” implies a common type of

acrobatics which, apart from its lack of any classical foundation, has no flowing *enchaînement*, each movement being isolated and finished with an air of *et voilà*. No dancer of any western school, let alone an acrobat, can fly as gracefully, "like down puffed by Aeolian lips"\*, as Struchkova. She was just as admirable in Moszkovsky's *Waltz* as in the roles of Giselle and Juliet, the only difference being that Moszkovsky's *Waltz* is *la belle danza*, whereas her art in Giselle and Juliet is something that goes beyond beautiful dancing.

*Walpurgisnacht* was disappointing, especially to those who remember the beautiful *Bacchannale* danced by Pavlova and Mordkin to Glazunov's inspiring music. Soviet choreographers excel in crowd scenes and mass dances, and some groupings in *Walpurgisnacht* were masterly and very effective, but the work as an ensemble lacked style and atmosphere. It is neither a bacchanalian rout of nymphs, satyrs and fauns nor an orgy of demons, witches and wizards on the Brocken as befits the Faust legend. Perhaps on a larger stage, in an appropriate decorative setting and more artistic costumes, it would have been less cramped and aesthetically more acceptable. No choreographer could compose a perfect ballet to Gounod's music from Faust; it is danceable but too melodramatic, with its "terrifying" fireworks. Struchkova's prodigious virtuosity, however, with its vertiginous *tours* and ethereal flights, was unhampered by the smallness of the stage, and her flame-coloured dancing as a bacchante thrilled the public.

Instead of presenting this grotesque pagan medley, the Bolshoi artists should have shown *Chopiniana (Les Sylphides)*, which would probably have captivated the public just as their incomparable *Giselle* did.

Some critics have contradicted themselves by saying that the Moscow style is at variance with the classical tradition in its lack of "punctuation" and grand manner, while affirming at the same time that it is old-fashioned. Abrupt "punctuation" has never been encouraged in the Russian school, and there has always been a tendency to develop flowing movement. A pose in ballet is equivalent to a pause in drama—a meditative arrest of movement; but an *arabesque*, for instance, is not merely a static pose held for the sake of formal beauty, but a means of expression of various moods which are gradually unfolding, and therefore it must have a liquid line flowing into another movement.

Other critics attribute the style of the Bolshoi dancers to the influence of Isadora Duncan, "whose ghost", said one of them, "was stalking the corridors of Croydon". No one will defend the inspired dilettantism of Isadora Duncan, who belonged to no school and had no classical foundation, but the freedom of her movements may to some extent have given Fokine an incentive to liberate the dance from the exaggerated restraints imposed upon it by the rigid classical tradition. Soviet dancers have 219 years of tradition, and they can afford to be at variance with some of its canons, just as Fokine was. Moreover, it should be realised that besides the strict academic tradition of Petipa, Johansen and Cecchetti there is also the tradition of the choreographic renaissance inherited from Ivanov, Fokine and Gorsky. The grand manner is apparent in Soviet dancers even when they are merely walking about the stage, but certainly it is not as formal as in pre-Fokine days; it always conforms to the role, just as their arm movements and the play of the hand at the wrist vary in accordance with the style of the dance and the theme of the ballet.

Ulanova was quite right when she said that "the interest and attention the British public have shown towards the ballet reveal a profound understanding of this art". Incidentally, the British public is, as Diaghilev was, quite indifferent to what the critics say. Criticism, however, may be very enlightening. For example, the articles of Mary Clarke and Joan Lawson in the November 1956

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\*From Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*.



issue of the *Dancing Times* are remarkable for their penetrating analysis and constructive evaluation of the creative choreographic processes of the Bolshoi company. And in the December issue Mary Clarke brilliantly refutes the objections to the Bolshoi's production of *Swan Lake*. It is amusing to read, in the November 1956 issue of the same periodical, Mr. Haskell's remarks about "the impoverishment of the female technique" of the Bolshoi Company, and his question: "What is the origin of this fussy, line-breaking, eye-diverting movement of the wrist? Is it the Moscow school or the influence of oriental dancing, so strong in Russia?" Madame Danilova's opinion about the Bolshoi dancers' *port de bras*, expressed in her article in the *Sunday Times* of October 14, 1956, may serve as an answer to Mr. Haskell's question. Having acknowledged the almost universally recognised fact that "the movement of their arms is fantastic" in its expressive plasticity, she goes on to write that "the oriental dances in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* show no awareness of real Eastern dances."

Fokine once demonstrated to me *port de bras* with cupped hands and rigidly rounded elbows, saying: "What is the sense in these arms?" This confirms that expressive fluidity is not a Soviet innovation. It was cultivated in the Maryinsky Theatre in preference to the *port de bras* of the Italian school. It is ludicrous to claim that what is called "control of the arms" here and *les tiges de sémaphore* in France is classical perfection.

Even more entertaining than the clash of Madame Danilova's and Mr. Haskell's opinions were Mr. J. Monahan's broadcast on November 11, 1956, and the diametrically opposite view expressed by Mr. Frank Jackson in *Reynolds News* on November 25, 1956. The main point of Mr. Monahan's devastating criticism was that the Sadler's Wells ballet could give a far greater lesson to the Bolshoi Company.

If Ulanova is right in saying that Sadler's Wells productions are in some ways "like a tiny kitten beside a cat", the question arises: Can a kitten teach a cat? On the other hand, can British dancers learn anything from the Russians? That this is also a controversial question follows from Mr. Jackson's statement: "Our ballet reflects our national climate and temperament. We could never be like the Bolshoi in a million years. It's pointless to try, or expect it. Ours is a ballet of pastel shades, of half-tints, of mists broken now and then by weakly sunshine. There are no extremes of climate. Ours is a ballet of dancers brought up to believe that any display of feeling is Bad Form. If our dancers tried to behave like Russians they'd only seem melodramatic, unconvincing and laughable. Our dancers' technique is not the liquid line of the Russians, but clipped, disciplined and bristly as a colonel's moustache."

Mr. Richard Buckle expresses a similar view in the November 1956 issue of *Dance and Dancers*. "It is obviously an advantage for a dancer to be Russian rather than English. Russians tend to be warm-hearted, impulsive and given to expressing their emotions. The English, when they feel anything at all, make every effort to conceal the fact, except of course in the football stadium or on the racecourse. Expression, not repression, is what theatrical artists have to develop. The Russians throw themselves heart and soul into their mime and dance."

As to Mr. Anton Dolin's article in the January 1957 issue of *Dance and Dancers*, it is so exceptional that I must quote a sample of his criticism to let readers who have seen Ulanova, acclaimed as a genius, judge its worth from the point of view of fairness, taste and cultural value. "Remembering that *In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is King*, it is not difficult to understand why Ulanova, in her dated setting, is so predominantly the great dance artist of the Bolshoi Ballet Company." He should perhaps remember another proverb, about motes and beams



Art values cannot be measured in arithmetical units like sporting competitions, and their relative degrees of greatness cannot be proved to everyone. There are nearly always conflicting views about them in the press. The public, however, when interested in any particular art, often senses which views are right, and reacts to an obvious error of judgment in the Galileo manner : *E pur si muove*.

Great artists seldom have a chance to say in print what they feel about criticism of their creations. Pushkin did so in *Unto myself I reared a monument not built by hand* :

Oh, muse, as ever now obey your God's command,  
Of insult unafraid, to praise and slander cool,  
Sing on, but in your wisdom no reward demand  
And do not argue when you meet a fool.

V.K.

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# Book Reviews

## SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE MEDIEVAL MANOR

**Studies in the Agrarian History of England in the Thirteenth Century.** By E. A. Kosminsky. Edited R. H. Hilton; translated Ruth Kisch (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 37s. 6d.).

FOR over half a century, ever since the days of Vinogradoff, Petrushevsky and Savine, the Russian contribution to English agrarian history has been an outstanding example of the value of the interchange of research and ideas between scholars in our two countries. Students of medieval history have been familiar with Academician Kosminsky's contribution, at least in outline, since the appearance of several articles by him in the *Economic History Review* between 1928 and 1933. Nevertheless, the appearance of a full English version of his authoritative study of agrarian relationships in thirteenth-century England has long been overdue. This work was first published in the USSR in 1935, and a second, enlarged edition was issued in 1947. When the second edition was reviewed in the *Economic History Review* in 1950, the writer, Professor M. M. Postan, was severely critical of certain aspects of the book, but he was careful to point out that "no critic will be able to deny its great importance". Kosminsky's "knowledge of the literature", he wrote, "his mastery of his evidence, his ability to combine the minute with the general, place him among the masters". Now at last, thanks above all to the efforts of the editor and translator, English readers can test the validity of this judgment for themselves; and it is safe to predict that they will not be disappointed.

In these studies, Kosminsky is primarily concerned with the evaluation of the classical theory of the English manor, which was developed by Seebohm and Vinogradoff at the end of the last century. It was one of the great representatives of the classical school, F. W. Maitland, who first pointed out the inadequacy of generalisations about medieval agrarian structure which did not take into account the wide variety of manorial forms in different parts of the country.

Since Maitland's day, these local variations have been analysed in a series of regional monographs which have demonstrated that the typical manorial order was apparently confined to the midland counties on which the classical account was based. And what Professor Kosminsky has in effect done is to show that even within this area the structure of agrarian relationship shows important deviations

from the classical pattern. Unlike Maitland, Kosminsky does not take the view that the meaning of the term manor is so vague as to be incapable of definition, but he insists that, while the typical manor was predominant in the midlands, other manorial forms—characterised by the small extent or even complete absence of villein land—also played an important role.

His book, therefore, is in the first place a regional study which attacks the classical theory on its home ground; but at the same time it is much more than another regional study. The detailed analysis will prove instructive for the specialist and the general reader alike, and the book also provides the general reader with the first clear and scholarly outline of the picture as a whole to be produced for many years.

One shares the editor's regret that it was found necessary for reasons of space to omit the author's introduction and first chapter, which discussed the bibliography of the subject and the general problems of English agrarian history. Fortunately, however, Professor Kosminsky begins with a brief sketch of the traditional theory; his argument is admirably clear throughout and his conclusions are precisely formulated.

In recent years there has been a tendency to interpret the development of medieval society in terms of impersonal market and demographic forces. Professor Kosminsky's influence will, however, help to redress the balance. He does not dispute the importance of the effects of growing commodity production in medieval society, but his view is that the impact of market relationships can only be understood in terms of the social context within which they operated. He suggests, for example, that in districts where the large manor was dominant the effect of increasing production for the market was to encourage an intensification of exploitation in general and of labour services in particular, whereas in districts where manorial organisation was poorly developed the effect was to hasten its early disintegration. Hence Kosminsky's primary interest in the manor and the importance which he attaches throughout the work to the character of manorial relationships and the relations of social classes.

Kosminsky recognises that while the composition of the various groups among the peasantry was continually changing, the fact of stratification itself was not a new phenomenon in the thirteenth century, but dated back to the Domesday

Book and beyond. Moreover, he points out that in the conditions of feudal society the upper ranks of the peasantry tended to merge with the small knights and to become in their turn lords of the manor, and provides us with a number of interesting case histories of this type from his studies of the jurors whose evidence provided the raw material for the Hundred Rolls. Indeed, he quotes some interesting evidence from the unpublished work of his pupil A. Y. Gurevich, which suggests that the origin of the small manors of the thirteenth century may eventually be traced back to the emergence of such an upper crust within the pre-Conquest peasantry. At the same time, Kosminsky also points out that the poorest sections of the peasantry did not yet constitute a class of free wage labourers; and that they should more accurately be regarded as a cross between a poor serf and a wage labourer in the modern sense.

The links between these free cottars on the one hand and the small manor owners on the other, and the capitalist farmers and labourers of a later age, remain to be traced in detail. For it must be remembered that Professor Kosminsky's work is concerned with agrarian relations in the thirteenth century, and he only hints at developments which more properly belong to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He hopes to throw further light on the impact of underlying economic forces and technical changes on the social relationships which have been subjected to such masterly analysis in this book. We can be sure that when the fruits of these fresh labours become available they will increase still further the already large debt which English students owe to Professor Kosminsky.

W. A. COLE.

*Abridged from SCR History Information Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 2.*

## REVISED TRANSLATION

**Foma Gordeyev.** By Maxim Gorky (Lawrence and Wishart, 12s. 6d.).

"**L**IFE?" he said bitterly. "Life is a mad-house. I'm always alone . . . wondering what it's all about. I'd be only too glad to spit on it all and disappear somewhere. Run away from everything. I can't bear it."

"Very curious", said Yezhov, rubbing his hands together and wriggling all over. "Very curious, if true, for it testifies to the fact that the holy spirit of discontent has penetrated into the bedchambers of the merchant class, has sought out the dead souls of those drowned in fat soups, in seas of tea and other beverages. Tell me your story, friend, bit by bit, and I shall write a novel."

Gorky's novel about the revolt of a rich merchant's son against the outlook and

way of life of his class is based on close personal observation of men like the Gordeyevs and their associates. The author had worked, like his character Yezhov, as a journalist on the local newspaper in a Volga town, and like him had been dismissed for "excessive bitterness". This novel—Gorky's first—is a vivid study of capitalist development as it expressed itself in the lives of the Volga merchants at the end of the nineteenth century; Foma Gordeyev appeared in the same year as Lenin's work on *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*.

Among the younger generation of the merchants of that time there were a few who, like Foma, rebelled against the wolfish, swinish existence of their class. Some, unlike Foma, found a positive way of manifesting their discontent, by helping the revolutionary movement; the most famous of these being Morozov, whose financial aid proved invaluable to the struggling Bolsheviks.

Perhaps the strongest feature of this novel is its presentation of "negative" characters such as Foma's father Ignat, his godfather Mayakin, the latter's son Taras, and the moneylender Shchurov, in the round, as real persons each with his own individual personality. Their impressive vigour and drive come across less convincingly than their baseness and greed. Nor are Foma's friends, the neurotic Yezhov and Mayakin's weakly amiable daughter, at all idealised.

This is not the first English version of *Foma Gordeyev*, but the two translations (by I. Hapgood and H. Bernstein) which appeared in 1901 are both out of print. The present one is an English editor's revision of a translation made in Moscow under the auspices of the Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Comparison of the revised and unrevised texts reveals a number of improvements. The Moscow translator gave Ignat's nickname (*Shaly* in the original) as "Freakish", which might be taken to mean misshapen, whereas the point of the nickname was that Ignat was a wayward, wilful man. The London editor's "Fury" is less ambiguous: but Hapgood's "Crazy Man" is perhaps better than either.

In a number of places Americanisms and other inappropriate dialectal forms have been combed out. Thus, it might strike an English reader as odd that anyone should say of Yezhov, a most Bohemian figure, "He's smart"; and this has duly been changed to "He's clever". Instead of a character replying to the question "Are you going, too?" with the words "I am that", he now says "Certainly". The London editor's greater sensitivity to double meanings has substituted "on" for "up" in the remark rendered by the Moscow translator as "I was up the creek inspecting the boats". "Murky" has become "dull" in the phrase "Mine is a

murky mind", since all that the speaker is confessing to is stupidity.

It is a pity, though, that Polydore Virgil of Urbino should have been left in Russian disguise as "Polidor Virgil Urbinsky"; and the Swiss national hero Winkelried gets most scurvy treatment, which moreover makes incomprehensible what Yezhov is trying to convey when he refers to Winkelried's famous exploit at Semmpach. We read (p. 238): "And your Winkelried was probably a fool, too, but if he hadn't run the imperial bayonet into himself he'd have beaten the Swiss". The latter part of this passage should read: "If he hadn't run the imperial spears into himself they'd have done for the Swiss".

BRIAN PEARCE.

## USEFUL MAPS AND DOUBTFUL STATISTICS

**The U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe: Oxford Regional Economic Atlas.** (Clarendon Press and Geoffrey Cumberlege, 42s.)

**T**HIS atlas, prepared by the Economist Intelligence Unit and the Cartographical Department of the Clarendon Press, contains a large number of useful maps on various topics, drawn by the Clarendon Press with its usual high standard of execution, and well printed.

There are also many pages of statistical and other information, which needs to be used with caution. Partly this is through no fault of the compilers: Soviet statistics were not available when they hazarded many of their guesses. The publication in 1956 of a handbook, *The National Economy of the USSR*, by the Central Statistical Department of the Council of Ministers came too late for corrections. The reader would be well advised to keep by him, as a companion volume, the translation of this handbook (published by Lawrence and Wishart in February 1957, at 21s.).

But there are also some regrettable cases of original error, not entirely unconnected with certain prejudices. It is strange, for example, to see the authors telling the USSR that they know better what its nationalities are, and that they may be grouped into twelve, "without offence to national characteristics or to ethnographical practice" (p. 96)—and then themselves proceeding to list over forty such nationalities, large and small, each of which constitutes a distinct Union Republic, Autonomous Republic, Autonomous

Region or National Area, according to its particular ethnical, cultural and economic heritage.

It is surprising to read at this late date that *ownership* of land is "vested" in the collective farms, and still more that an "appreciable proportion" of the workers employed in State farms "consists of forced labour" (p. 36). The Donetsk coal-field installations "were not destroyed" by the Germans, we are told (p. 52); in reality, all 306 main pits in the Stalino and Voroshilovgrad regions were blocked with smashed equipment and rocks, and then flooded. The loss of population owing to German occupation, we learn (p. 33), was the real reason why there was "no serious famine" in the USSR during the second world war (not the superior organisation of agriculture). Evidently the Nazis were a blessing in disguise.

History is not the strong point of those who compiled the letterpress. After all the researches of Rybakov, Tikhomirov, Artsykhovskiy and others into ancient Russian towns and handicrafts, we are told (p. 100) that Kiev was founded as "a Varangian outpost" in the eighth century, and that "the military character" of the early Russian cities was "uppermost". State ownership of industry, land, banks and foreign trade in 1918 "was described as state capitalism" (p. 104)—an illusion dispelled over thirty years ago. "Private ownership in land was partially restored" in 1921 (*ibid*), and the Rural Code of 1922 declared private ownership of land "transitory" (p. 32). In reality, private ownership of land was abolished for ever in 1917, and Articles 1 and 2 of the Code reaffirmed this.

There is a good deal of other misinformation about the land and the peasants, which might have been expected in a political propaganda sheet but hardly in a work of this description. More care should have been taken even in the guesses, for example that the forest shelter belt project "seems to have been dropped after the death of Stalin" (p. 33). The experience of many foreigners in air or train travel over the south-eastern European areas of the USSR provided an answer; now the statistics of the slowed-down but still impressive project have been published—the 250km. Kamyshin-Stalingrad belt doing well; the 700km. Bielgorod-Don belt shortly to be checked; two belts totalling nearly 1800km. to be planted in 1957 and 1958. (*Moscow News*, 26.1.57.)

A.R.

## Notice to Subscribers

A number of subscribers have complained that envelopes containing copies of the "Anglo-Soviet Journal" have been reaching them in a damaged condition. We find that more substantial envelopes would add considerably to the cost of dispatch; to avoid this, we propose in future, starting with the present issue, to send out copies in wrappers. This will involve one fold down the middle of the journal; but we think subscribers will prefer this to an extra postal charge.

# Correspondence

The Editor,  
ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL.

Dear Sir,

A passage in the review by S. J. of my book *Ivan the Not-So-Terrible* (a passage which, unfortunately, is typical of the review as a whole) reads: "Mr. Johnstone's views on literary merit are highly personal. The notion, for instance, that Dreiser 'makes a completely valid comparison' with Jack London is preposterous."

I expressed no such "notion"; I made no such "comparison"; I made no statement whatever on my "views on literary merit". I deliberately confined myself to a comparison of certain circulation figures and chronological matters which, I fondly hoped, even the most hostile of critics would accept.

Because I intended my book to be a contribution to the cause of Anglo-Soviet friendship, I feel compelled to defend it from what I consider to be damaging and irresponsible criticism—in ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL of all publications. I refuse to hurl back at the criticism its unexploded epithet "preposterous", but I feel that it deserves at the least S.J.'s own super-charged term, "highly personal".

Yours sincerely,

ARCHIE JOHNSTONE.

Moscow,  
January 19, 1957.

[I find it hard to agree that the following passage—pp. 48, 49 of Mr. Johnstone's book—is confined to a comparison of cir-

ulation figures and chronological matters.

"Here are five great writers . . . Scott, Shakespeare, Shaw, Stevenson, Swift. All of them are popular here, infinitely more popular than any of the giants of Russian literature are in the English-speaking world; and lovers of Jack London would be proud to know that he holds his own . . . not just with any one of them, but with all of them combined—and more than twice over! But it could be said: 'Ah yes, but Jack London is both a great writer and a great socialist writer, and that combination must have a special appeal . . .'; but even Theodore Dreiser, who makes a completely valid comparison, has less than a fifth of London's total."

To me, the words "great" and "giants" cannot but imply literary merit, and the comparison between London and Dreiser hinges on the words "great socialist writer". If not, I cannot see what other meaning there can be. I would not claim either London or Dreiser as the "better" writer, but they are utterly *different*.

Mr. Johnstone, in his book, quotes circulation figures only *after* the above passage. He also goes on to explain and emphasise that London is one of those fortunate writers whose work "loses exceptionally little in translation"—which of itself strikes at the "validity" of the comparison with other writers who do so lose.

I rebut the charge of irresponsibility, and also, since (a) the review was favourable ("this is a book to be read"), and (b) it appeared several months after the date of publication, the suggestion that it can have been "damaging".—S.J.]

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

GOGOL. By David Magarshack. (*Faber and Faber*, 36s.)

RUSSIAN POETRY 1917-1955. Translated and with an introduction by Jack Lindsay. (*The Bodley Head*, 15s.)

SOVIET YOUTH. By Dorothea L. Meek. (*Routledge and Kegan Paul*, 28s.)

TWO CAPTAINS. By V. Kaverin. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 15s.)

USSR ECONOMY, THE: A STATISTICAL ABSTRACT. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 21s.)



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